

Sunday, September 11, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 28 Introduction to Preservation

Introduction

- Since our last meeting on April 17, I have been reading and studying in preparation for the resumption of class. The bulk of my reading over the last four and half months has focused on the doctrine of preservation. In the interest of full transparency, I have read a host of books or portions thereof as well as essays and articles in theological journals. My reading has traversed both sides of the preservation controversy, and included the titles listed in the summer 2016 Reading List on page 8.
 - During our intermission I also wrote a paper titled *The King James Bible in America: An Orthographic, Historical, and Textual Investigation*. This paper is currently undergoing a peer review by a group of pastors and Bible teachers.
- Much of what I read was very challenging to my previous thinking on the topic of preservation. More than once during the course of the past four and half months I contemplated giving up and just ending the class. As the reading list demonstrates there are scholarly men with high academic credentials on both sides of this issue. All of this just highlights all the more our need to base our thinking on this topic upon God's word, not mere human opinion.
- I am still in the process of working through how to explain where I am at on these issues. I am aware that doing this in real time, in front of a live audience, might expose me to criticism as I work through the limitations of terminology. Here is what I know; even within the King James Camp there is no universally agreed upon viewpoint to which everyone subscribes. There are many sub-views that are arrived at via various means and for a variety of reasons. There is a tendency exhibited by some to consider those with nuanced or slightly different views as not being “King James enough.” That being said, all I am asking for is a fair hearing before one decides to brand me one way or the other.

Review

- After dealing with some preliminary issues (Lessons 1-10), the main objective of our first term was to set forth a clear understanding of the doctrine of inspiration. In doing so, we considered the following:
 - Various Theories of Inspiration (Lesson 11)
 - Potential Pitfalls of the Plenary Position (Lesson 12)
 - Passages Proving the Plenary Position (Lesson 13)
 - Divine Dictation as the Mechanism of Inspiration? (Lessons 14-17)

- God's Design in Inspiration: Equality Between the Living and Written Word (Lesson 18)
 - The Living Word's Attitude Toward the Written Word (Lesson 19)
 - The New Testament Writer's Attitude Toward the Written Word (Lesson 20)
 - Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Undesigned Coincidences (Lessons 21-22)
 - Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Fulfilled Prophecy (Lesson 23)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the Old Testament (Lesson 24)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the New Testament (Lesson 25)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Transmission of the Text (Lesson 26)
 - Disclaimers Regarding the Limitations of Inspiration (Lesson 27)
- In Lesson 2, I introduced you to the following set of presuppositions that we used to guide our study of inspiration.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified His word above His own name. (Psalms 138:2)
 - God's word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)
 - God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated His word to mankind. (I Timothy 3:16 & II Peter 1:21)
 - God's words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (Isaiah 30:8, I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7)
 - Generally speaking, the first five of these presuppositions are not in dispute among leading Evangelical and Fundamentalists theologians. However, the same could certainly not be said for the sixth presupposition regarding preservation. Much ink has been spilt debating this doctrine. It is to understanding the sixth presupposition i.e., the doctrine of preservation, that we will devote the majority of our time in this section of the class.

- Introductory Lessons 3 and 4 as well as 8 through 10 did touch upon preservation, perhaps a bit prematurely, but lack the details we will begin covering this morning. By way of review, we observed the following basic points about preservation in these early lessons.
 - Preservation is the Bible’s claim for itself. God promised to preserve that which He inspired.
 - God did not see fit to accomplish His fundamental promise of preservation by preserving the original autographs. This is evident because, had He chosen to accomplish preservation in this fashion, we would possess the originals today.
 - In order to accomplish the preservation of His word, God did not preserve it in a state of “exact sameness” but in a state of “pureness.”
 - There are substantive differences in meaning between the *TR* and the Critical Text that impact the accuracy of the text, some of which impact doctrine.
- The goal of these early lessons **was not** to set forth a fully developed doctrine of preservation. One must first fully appreciate the doctrine of inspiration before being able to fully grasp the doctrine of preservation in its fullness. Put another way, if one does not accurately understand inspiration, he will struggle to understand what is being preserved and how to scripturally identify the process.

Taking Stock of the Facts

- Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
- Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
 - Alexandrian manuscripts א (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus), the two so-called oldest and best, differ with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone.
 - The manuscripts comprising the Alexandrian Text Type differ from those comprising the Byzantine Text Type.
 - No two Byzantine manuscripts read exactly the same.
- Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
 - Editions of the *TR* are not exactly the same.
 - The *TR* differs from the Critical Text
 - Critical Text editions are not exactly the same.

- United Bible Society
 - Nestle-Aland
- Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
- Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
- Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.
- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Textus Receptus contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)
- All of this raises serious questions as to the extent and means by which preservation was accomplished. Some, as we will see in the coming weeks, go so far as to say that there is no such thing as preservation i.e., it is a contrived doctrine to support King James Onlyism.
- What is clear is this, demanding “exact sameness” or “identical wording” as your standard of preservation reaches beyond the historical and textual facts and is ultimately unhelpful and detrimental to one’s position. Yet, this is exactly what many King James advocates argue for when they hold to “plenary preservation” or “identical preservation.” Opponents of the King James are more than happy to allow King James advocates to adopt this standard as their burden of proof because they know the “verbatim” or “identical” preservation cannot be sustained in the light of the facts.
- The following points are inescapable:
 - God promised to persevere His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:89, 111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.
 - This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.

- God did not supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
 - Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
- If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.
- So how do we make sense of all of this? One could adopt a completely humanistic or naturalistic approach and try to reason through the conundrum on the basis of human viewpoint alone. Or, one can look to God’s word for guidance and insight into how to think about the problem, just as we did in our investigation of inspiration. I believe that we should allow the Holy Spirit to instruct us how to think about the issue. When in doubt, the viewpoint of faith is always best.
- This brings us back to the end of Lesson 27 where we left off last April. Many encounter problems studying manuscript evidence/textual criticism because they approach the subject from the vantage point of human viewpoint. In other words, the subject is broached with a lack of thorough understanding of the fundamental underlying doctrines.
- As we have seen through our study of inspiration, the Bible is unlike any other book and should be approached accordingly. Once again, Dr. Edward F. Hills pointed this out in his 1956 book *The King James Version Defended*.
 - “The Christian Church has long confessed that the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, are divine Scriptures, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “. . . Since the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament has, in all ages, stimulated the copying of these sacred books, it is evident that this doctrine is important for the history of the New Testament text, no matter whether it be a true doctrine or only a belief of the Christian Church. But what if it be true? What if the original New Testament manuscripts actually were inspired of God? If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament is a true doctrine, then New Testament textual criticism is different from the textual criticism of ordinary books.” (Hills, 1-2)
 - “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism; the consistently Christian method and the naturalistic method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- What does Hills mean when he uses the phrase “naturalistic method” in these quotes? He is referring to the methodology of “naturalism” or the “philosophical viewpoint according to which

everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted.” ([Google Definition](#))

- Drs. Westcott and Hort, in the introduction to [The New Testament in the Original Greek](#), started their task with the presupposition that the Bible is to be treated like any other book.
 - “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate. (Westcott and Hort, 73)
- This presupposition is no doubt a result of their low view of inspiration. When speaking about “primitive corruption” in the text, Dr. Hort states:
 - “Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in. They may be due to the original writer, or his amanuensis if wrote from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers.” (Westcott and Hort, 280-281)
- On this point Hort stands in opposition to modern Evangelical scholarship in that he allows for “corruption” to have entered the text via the “original writer.” Such a position explains why Hort is reluctant to ascribe infallibility to the text in any form. In a letter addressed to J.B. Lightfoot dated May 1, 1860, Hort stated in part:
 - “I am convinced that any view of the Gospels, which distinctly and consistently recognizes for them a natural and historical origin (whether under a special Divine superintendence or not), and assumes that they did not drop down ready-made from heaven, must and will be ‘startling’ to an immense portion of educated English people. But so far, at least, Westcott and I are perfectly agreed, and I confess I had hoped that you (Lightfoot) would assent. . . If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N.T. practically a *sine quo non* for co-operation, I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels. I am most anxious to find the N.T. infallible, and have a strong sense of the Divine purpose guiding all its parts; but I cannot see how the exact limits of such guidance can be ascertained except by unbiased a posteriori criticism. . . (Regarding the question of “Providence” in Biblical Hort writes) Most strongly I recognize it; but I am not prepared to say that it necessarily involves absolute infallibility.” (Hort, 419-421)
- This is the type of textual criticism that Dr. Hills is referring to when he talks about the “naturalistic method.” He is speaking about an approach to the scriptures that doubts their supernatural origin, doubts their infallibility even in the original autographs, and treats the Bible as though it were any other book. Such was the approach of Drs. Westcott and Hort.

Works Cited

Bauder, Kevin T. "An Appeal to Scripture" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Hills, Edward F. *The King James Version Defended*. Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956.

Hort, Fenton John Anthony. *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort, Vol. I*. London: Macmillian and Company LTD, 1896.

Westcott, Brooke Foss & Fenton John Anthony Hort. *The New Testament in The Original Greek*. London: Macmillian and Company LTD, 1896.

Summer 2016 Reading List

Books

- Brandenburg, Kent. *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*. El Sobrante, CA: Pillar & Ground Publishing, 2003.
- Cloud, David W. *Myths About the Modern Bible Versions*. Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 1999.
- DiVietro, Kirk. *Cleaning-Up Hazardous Materials: A Refutation of Gail Riplinger's Hazardous Materials*. Collingswood, NJ: The Dean Burgon Society, 2010.
- Jones, Floyd Nolen. *Which Version is the Bible?* Humboldt, TN: Kingsword Press, 1989.
- Letis, Theodore P. *The Majority Text: Essays and Reviews in the Continuing Debate*. Institute for Biblical and Textual Studies, 1987.
- Miller, Edward. *A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. 1886.
- Moorman, Jack. *Forever Settled: A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible*. Collingswood, NJ: The Dean Burgon Society Press, 1999.
- Norris, Rick. *The Unbound Scriptures: A Review of KJV-Only Claims and Publications*. Fayetteville, NC: Unbound Scripture Publications, 2003.
- Pickering, Wilbur. *The Identity of the New Testament Text*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980.
- Pickering, Wilbur and Phillip Kayser. *Has God Indeed Said? The Preservation of the Text of the New Testament*. Omaha, NE: Biblical Blueprints, 2009.
- Sorenson, David H. *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*. Duluth, MN: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001.
- Sturz, Harry A. *The Byzantine Text-Type & New Testament Textual Criticism*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984.
- Surrett, Charles L. *Which Greek Text? The Debate Among Fundamentalists*. Kings Mountain, NC: Surrett Family Publications, 2013.
- Taylor, Jim. *In Defense of the Textus Receptus*. Cleveland, GA: Old Path Publications, 2016.
- Van Bruggen, Jakob. *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*. 1976.

Essays and Journal Articles

Bauder, Kevin T. "The Issues at Hand" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Bauder, Kevin T. "An Appeal to Scripture" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Beacham, Roy E. "The Old Testament Text and the Version Debate" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Borland, James A. "Re-Examining New Testament Textual-Critical Principles and Practices Used to Negate Inerrancy" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. December 1982.

Borland, James A. "The Preservation of the New Testament Text: A Common Sense Approach" in *Faculty Publications and Presentation of Liberty University*. Spring 1999.

Combs, William W. "The Preface of the King James Version and the King James-Only Position" in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. Fall 1996.

Combs, William W. "Errors in the King James Version?" in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. Fall 1999.

Combs, William W. "The Preservation of Scripture?" in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. Fall 2000.

Glenny, W. Edward. "The Preservation of Scripture" in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary*. Minneapolis, MN: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997.

Krinke, John M. "Should Believers Accept the Preservation of God's Word(s) by Faith, or by History & Science" Submitted to the Dean Burgon Society in July 1997.

Kutilek, Douglas K. "The Background and Origin on the Version Debate" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Rehurek, Jon. "Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous? The Biblical View" in *The Master's Seminary Journal*. Spring 2008.

Skilton, John H. "The New Testament Text Today" in *The New Testament Student and His Field, Vol. 5*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1982.

Wallace, Daniel B. "Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 1989.

Wallace, Daniel B. "The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*.1991.

Wallace, Daniel B. "Inspiration, Preservation, And New Testament Textual Criticism" in *Grace Theological Journal*. 1992.

Wallace, Daniel B. "The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. June 1994.